

Docket No. 3658-0103P

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) A method of detecting destructive joint diseases which comprises detecting collagenase 3 as a prognostic clinical marker for the detection of destructive joint diseases.

2. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein collagenase 3 is detected for prognosis of the progression of rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

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3. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the collagenase 3 mRNA expression is determined qualitatively and quantitatively.

4. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the collagenase 3 antigen, both as a pro-enzyme and also in an activated form, is determined qualitatively and quantitatively.

5. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the catalytic activity of the activated collagenase 3 is detected.

6. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the quantitative relationships between collagenase 3 and its specific or unspecific inhibitors are determined by determination of free collagenase 3 protein and of the same bound in complexes with inhibitors and compared.

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7. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the detection is done in tissues and body fluids.

8. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein synovial membrane preparations, cartilage and bone preparations or preparations of the synovial membrane/cartilage interface, obtained in synovectomies, artificial joint replacement, inter alia operative interventions, and also in biopsies are used as tissue.

9. (Amended) The method of Claim 7, wherein synovial fluid or blood are used as body fluids.

10. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein collagenase 3 is used for the detection of an increased genetic predisposition for rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

11. (Amended) The method of the increase of the clinical relevance of the meaningfulness according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein not only collagenase 3, but also further markers such as HLA antigens for the detection of a more severe progression of RA or markers such as certain patterns of HLA antigens for the detection of an increased genetic predisposition are used.

12. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein

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AZ not only collagenase 3, but also MT1-MMP and/or gelatinase A act  
as prognostic markers by determination of their mRNA or protein  
expression, their amount and localization or their catalytic  
activity in tissues or body fluids.

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